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ABSTRACT

Many times, young people can make a significant impact on their communities. An example of this potential is evident in the Minnesota statewide youth program, in which at-risk youth rebuild their neighborhoods. The program enables young people to gain job skills while working toward their high school diploma or GED, to play a respected role in their communities, and to build safe, affordable housing. The program targets youth involved with the criminal justice system and those who belong to gangs. The program also helps those youth who have difficulty making the transition from school to work. The program serviced approximately 315 young people in 1995 and 46 units of affordable housing were made available to over 200 homeless, battered women and children, and low-income persons. During 1995, 80% of all participants (ages 16 to 24) successfully completed the program, averaging 90% attendance. Overall follow-up data indicate that an estimated 70% of participants went on to obtain their high school diploma or GED. Fifty percent of all graduates attended a technical and vocational school, college, or other postsecondary institution. Participants gained increased skills in leadership development and self-esteem and reduction in negative behaviors. A synopsis of each of the state programs is provided. (RJM)

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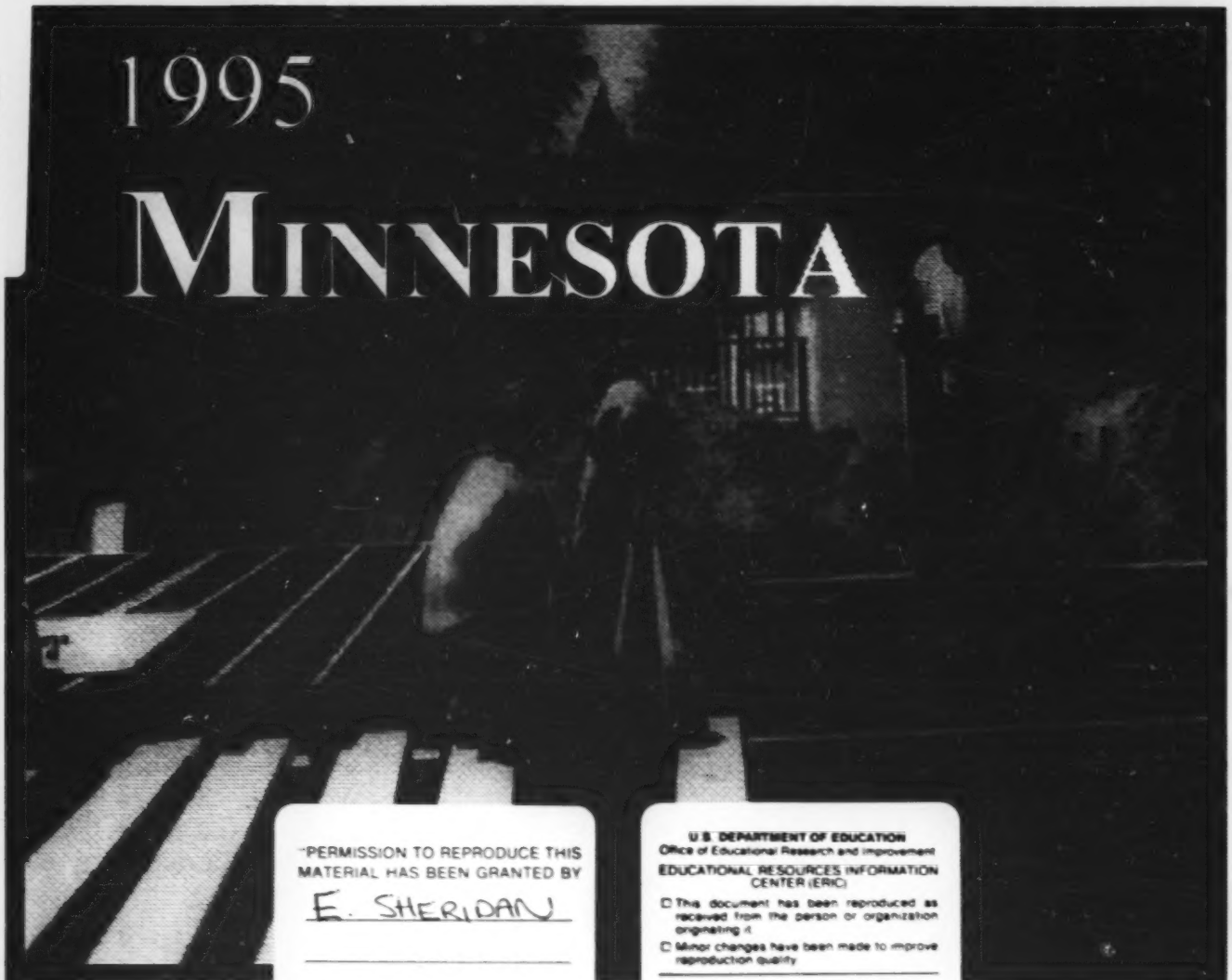

1995

MINNESOTA

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YOUTHBUILD

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Prepared by the Minnesota Department of Economic Security
Workforce Preparation Branch/Office of Youth Development
January 1996

In Accordance with Minnesota Statutes 268.362 to 268.367

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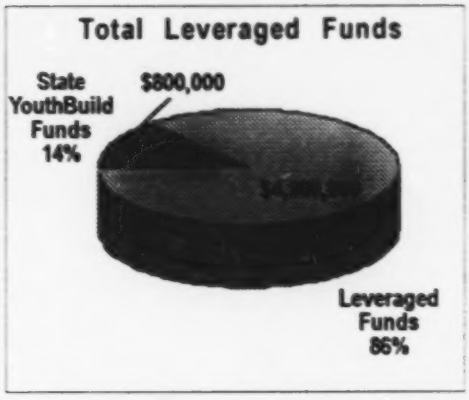
The Minnesota YouthBuild Program demonstrates a commitment to Minnesota's at-risk youth and their communities by helping young people rebuild their neighborhoods and take charge of their lives.

The program enables young people to gain useful job skills while working toward their high school diploma or GED, play a respected role in their communities, and build the most essential commodity needed by their families and neighbors: safe, affordable housing.

Funding and Quality Standards

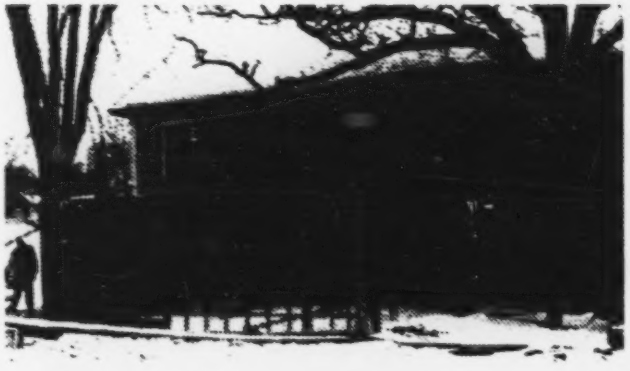
At the state level, the YouthBuild Program is an integral part of the employment and training programs in the Workforce Preparation Branch of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security. These programs are specifically designed to reduce unemployment and poverty in Minnesota and promote economic self-sufficiency.



In 1995, the Legislature provided $600,000 in YouthBuild funds to the Department of Economic Security which awarded grants to Bi-County CAP in Bemidji, The City, Inc. in Minneapolis, Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative in Chaska, Two or More, Inc. in Minneapolis, City Academy in St. Paul, Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. in Detroit Lakes, Private Industry Council 5 in Willmar, Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency in Virginia, and Guadalupe Area Project in St. Paul.

The program demonstrates substantial leveraging of additional matching funds through its coordination with local community, housing, and educational agencies, technical colleges, trade unions, court services, law enforcement agencies, and drug treatment and prevention programs. Matching funds leveraged for the program totalled over $4 million in 1995.

To ensure quality standards and compliance with state statutes and labor laws, representatives of the Department of Economic Security make regular site visits to monitor the programs and provide technical assistance.



"The students are gaining in experience as leaders on the job site. They are physically and mentally using their skills."
- Bill Strader, instructor

In accordance with M.S. 3.197, the cost of preparing this report was $850.

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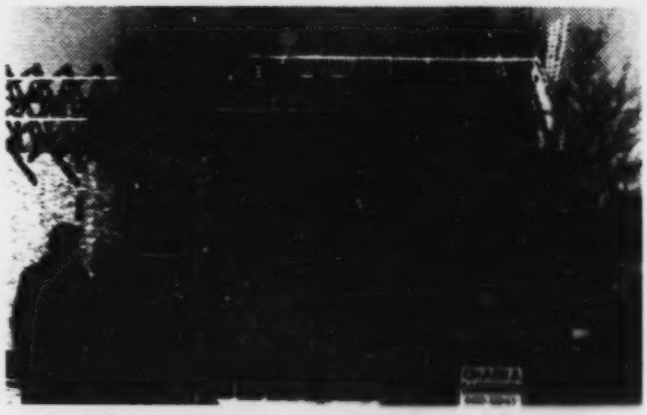
Crime Prevention Focus

The Minnesota YouthBuild program specifically targets youth involved with the criminal justice system and those involved in gangs, with 65 percent of program participants previously involved with the criminal justice system or gangs.

Strict standards are required. Two or More's program requires youth to refrain from all criminal activity and gang involvement while enrolled in the program, including drug and alcohol use. Two or More, Inc. also requires strict tenant screening and standards to reduce and eliminate drug dealing and criminal activity on all housing projects.



"As the construction supervisor, it's very rewarding to watch the students gain knowledge and pride in the work that they do."- Gary Dohse, instructor

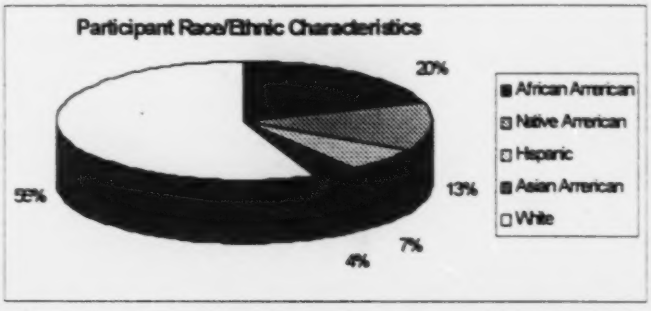
"Each of us is individually responsible to the whole group."
- Akeem Pendleton and Robert Harvey

School to Work Transition Model

The Minnesota YouthBuild Program is an excellent example of a school to work transition model. Moreover, the program targets youth who have the most difficulty in making the transition from school to work, high risk dropouts and youth offenders. By providing an alternative high school education and technical skills training in the highly skilled field of construction carpentry, participants gain the necessary education and skills to successfully transition from school to a job or advanced post secondary training. In addition, the program provides opportunities in post secondary options, career counseling, job mentoring, and work maturity skills training to assist youth in the transition from school to work.

Community Service Focus

The Minnesota YouthBuild Program is an excellent model of youth community service. Meaningful and necessary community service is accomplished through the rebuilding of neighborhoods and various community service projects across the state.



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Program Description

The Minnesota YouthBuild Program served approximately 315 young people in 1995. Forty-six (46) units of affordable housing were made available to over 200 homeless, battered women and children, and low-income persons during the past year. All youth participants are 16 to 24, economically disadvantaged or eligible for the High School Graduation Incentives Program, and have previously dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school. Approximately half of the participants are youth of color. Last year, approximately 80 percent of the youth served had left or been expelled from school, 65 percent have had involvement with the juvenile justice system, 20 percent are teen parents, a third were recovering chemically dependent, half were experiencing emotional/behavioral or learning disabilities, two thirds come from single parent families, and 90% are economically disadvantaged. The estimated program cost is $1,600 per participant.

"The work we do makes us feel proud, positive, and helpful." - Robert Harvey

Program Objectives

The objectives of the Minnesota YouthBuild Program are fourfold:

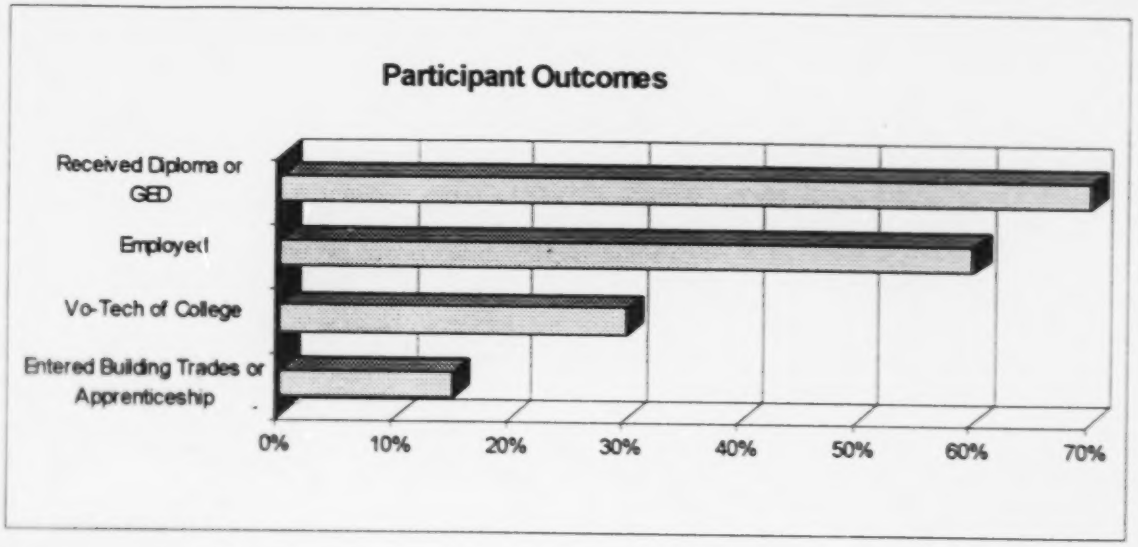
(1) Increase education and basic skills of at-risk youth:
- Improve basic academic performance and high school attendance
- Increase high school and GED graduation rates
- Increase enrollment of at-risk youth in post-secondary and technical institutions

(2) Increase the employability skills of at-risk youth:
- Increase job readiness and work maturity skills
- Increase construction job skills for hard to employ youth
- Increase job placement for young persons in the building trades/related fields

(3) Provide leadership opportunities for at-risk youth:
- Develop self-esteem, respect, and personal empowerment
- Enhance citizenship, decision making, problem solving, and negotiating skills
- Develop peer mentoring in youth
- Reduce juvenile crime and other negative behaviors

(4) Increase affordable housing in Minnesota:
- Increase affordable housing for homeless, battered, and poor families or individuals
- Rebuild deteriorating communities and neighborhoods

"This program is an investment in my future." - Yohance Moore



Program Outcomes

During 1995, 80% of all participants successfully completed the program and averaged 90% attendance overall. Follow up data collected over the past three years indicates that an estimated 70% of the participants went on to obtain their high school diploma or GED. Fifty percent of all graduates went on to technical and vocational school, colleges, and other post secondary institutions. Upon completion of the program, approximately 60% of the participants were employed at an average starting wage of $7.00 an hour. Participants also gained increased skills in leadership development, self-esteem, and reduction in negative behaviors and attitudes regarding work, school, and social interactions.

"Watching these young people work is great. Their growth in self-esteem is one of the best parts of the program."
-Dave Kinney, instructor

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BI-COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION COUNCIL (BI-CAP)
BEMIDJI, MN

Bi-CAP, Inc., a private nonprofit corporation serving the areas of Beltrami and Cass counties, operates the Minnesota YouthBuild Program in collaboration with Rural MN CEP Inc., Cass Lake Area Learning Center and the Bemidji Area Learning Center. The project leveraged $1.75 million in private, public, and nonprofit funds, including two federal YouthBuild grants from HUD, to match the $146,666 grant it received from the Department of Economic Security. Bi-CAP operated the pilot phase of the YouthBuild Program in 1989 which received the Minnesota Community Action Association's "Excellence Award".

EDUCATION

Each student spends approximately four hours each day in the classroom receiving individualized instruction. The curriculum includes English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health/Physical Education, Independent Living Skills and World of Work Training. Academic credit is earned for every 120 hours of instruction or successful completion of individualized learning packages.

WORK EXPERIENCE

The work experience component is two-tiered. Tier One allows young persons to earn academic credit through vocational or Technical College courses and through World of Work seminars emphasizing job readiness skills. Tier Two provides up to two elective credits for work experience in the building trades industry. A certified instructor supervises two crews of youth. Participants are paid $4.25 an hour for 35 hours a week of program participation.

LEADERSHIP/SUPPORT SERVICES

Youth are represented on the Project Advisory Committee which reviews and makes decisions on current program issues and problems. Community service projects in 1995 included a United Way coat sort, yard work for elderly home owners, and a local food shelf collection. A self- sufficiency case manager meets with youth every week to assist them on their Individual Transition to Employment Plans and to discuss any concerns they may have. Each participant is allotted approximately $300 to provide for child care, clothing, transportation, housing, food, and medical services.

HOUSING

During 1995, four single family homes were rehabilitated in Cass Lake and Walker to house homeless families in the Cass county area. A donated motel in Bemidji will be renovated in 1996. Half the structure will be transformed into four transitional living apartments for homeless and very low income persons and the other half will be used as a YouthBuild training facility.

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THE CITY INC.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN

"Pride in the City" YouthBuild Program in Minneapolis is a collaborative effort between The City, Inc., a nonprofit youth service agency, and Project for Pride in Living, a nonprofit housing development agency. The project leveraged approximately $108,000 of private, public, and in-kind funds in addition to the $106,666 grant received from the Department of Economic Security.

EDUCATION

Each student enrolled in The City School, an accredited alternative learning center, spends a minimum of five hours each day in classroom instruction. Teacher-student ratios of 1 to 11, in addition to teacher aides, allow for individualized instruction year round. The curriculum emphasizes basic skill acquisition in Math and English, problem solving, leadership development and a community building mission. Of the thirty students enrolled in the YouthBuild Program over 80% advanced to a higher grade level during 1995.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Under the supervision of a journeyman carpenter, participants spend 15 hours a week gaining specific construction skills training in basic carpentry as well as job readiness, job placement, and job keeping skills. Elective credit and $150 stipends are earned every six weeks for 80 percent attendance or better, gaining building trades skills and work-related behaviors.

LEADERSHIP/SUPPORT SERVICES

Leadership training is developed through cultural activities and field trips. All City School students have access to the on-site services of job placement, career counseling, individual and group therapy, legal advocacy, recreation and drop-in center programming, after care and day treatment programs, on-site day care and parenting services. Parental involvement is also emphasized in the program. Last year, 95 percent of all parents attended parent-teacher conferences at The City School.

HOUSING

During 1995, Pride in the City students constructed a basketball court at St. Anne's School, and renovated a single family home, and renovated three housing projects sponsored by St. Joseph's Hope Community.

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CARVER-SCOTT EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE
CHASKA, MN

Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative operates the Minnesota YouthBuild Program in collaboration with Scott-Carver-Dakota Community Action Agency and Scott and Carver County Employment and Training. The project leveraged over $800,000 in private, public, and nonprofit funds in addition to the $146,666 grant it received from the Department of Economic Security. In 1990 and 1991, the Carver-Scott Education Cooperative was selected as a Department of Education model for applied skills curriculum and outcome based education.

EDUCATION

Each student spends approximately 30 hours each in pre-employment and job readiness workshops, and pre-construction training. The curriculum emphasizes applied math and reading skills. Last year, participants averaged a 69% increase from pre- to post test scores on math skills applied to daily work situations.

WORK EXPERIENCE

A certified vocational instructor provides specific construction skills training to youth on the work site. Each young person receives work experience training that includes problem solving seminars, job readiness, job search, and job application. Students are involved from start to finish on each project, enabling them to experience first hand, all facets of housing construction. Participants earn $4.25 an hour in the summer, with a $1.00 per hour bonus for 95% attendance, and receive vocational credit which is accepted at Hennepin Technical College.

"Since this is my first time working in a hands-on program. I've learned that it takes a lot of commitment to build a house."
- James St. Clair

LEADERSHIP/ SUPPORT SERVICES

The program utilizes peer mentoring in both the classroom and work site. Case management is provided jointly by the project coordinator and JTPA youth worker who assist in developing an Individualized Success Plan with each participant.

HOUSING

During 1995, participants completed new construction and/ or renovation of 17 units of low income housing, including a two-unit battered women's house in the city of Prior Lake.

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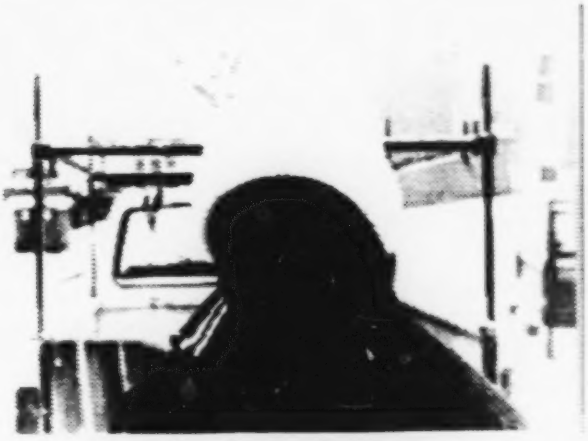
TWO OR MORE, INC.
MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Two or More, Inc., a non profit agency with the mission to work with inner city youth, operates the YouthBuild program in Minneapolis in collaboration with the Plymouth Christian Youth Center, William D. Pierce and Associates, the Northside Residents Redevelopment Corporation, Glenwood-Lyndale Community Center and Phyllis Wheatley Community Center. The project leveraged approximately 430,000 of private, public, and foundation funds in addition to a $130,000 grant from the Department of Economic Security.



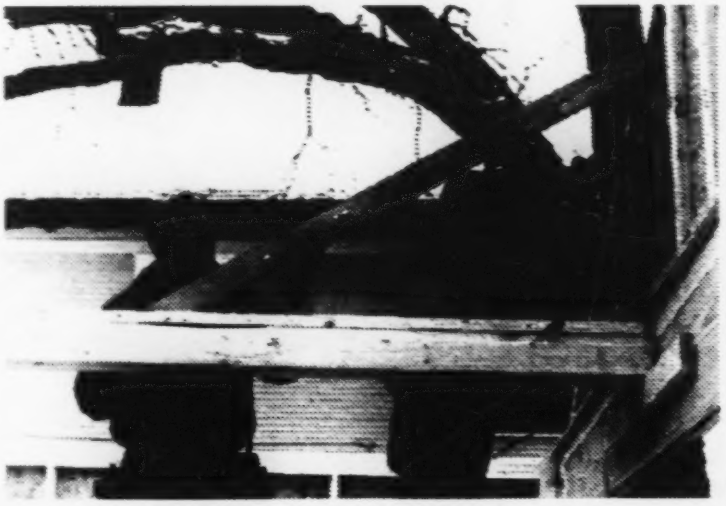
"I love it. YouthBuild has shown me that life is more than being 'in the streets'."
- Yohance Moore

EDUCATION
Students are grouped based upon their individual academic plan. On a bi-weekly basis, all students are in classes working toward their high school diploma, GED, or improving core workplace competencies in applied construction math and reading comprehension. The curriculum also emphasizes job readiness, life management skills and career planning.

WORK EXPERIENCE
On the worksite, two Journey Level carpenters provide an average of 20 hours a week of construction skills training, use of tools, safety principles and teamwork. Participants are a paid a training wage of $5.50 to $7.50 an hour during their eighteen months in the program.

LEADERSHIP/SUPPORT SERVICES
As members of the Youth Advisory Council, participants make decisions on disciplinary actions, hiring of staff, conflict resolution, project improvements and evaluation. Students are also required to participate in selected individual or group community service projects in the surrounding community. A career counselor assists youth with support services and works with them in setting future education and employment objectives.

HOUSING
Two or More participants have completed renovation and/or construction of 18 units of affordable housing in Minneapolis to serve an estimated 80 low income individuals.



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CITY ACADEMY
SAINT PAUL, MN

City Academy, the nation's first charter school, operates the YouthBuild Program in collaboration with Northern States Power Company (NSP), the City of St. Paul Planning and Economic Development Agency, and the East Side Neighborhood Community Development Corporation (ESNDC). The project leveraged over $600,000 of private, public, and in-kind funds in addition to a $65,000 grant from the Department of Economic Security. City Academy serves 100% dropout youth who have left or been expelled from school.

EDUCATION

City Academy students spend 30 hours a week in the classroom with teacher-student ratios of 1 to 5. Internships with NSP and the City of St. Paul provide students hands-on learning in the business world. The curriculum includes all facets of the construction industry: market research, site selection, negotiations with city agencies, financing, mortgage underwriting, marketing processes and property management techniques. In June of 1995, City Academy presented 40 young adults with their diplomas. Twenty-five have confirmed plans for post-secondary education at technical and private colleges.

WORK EXPERIENCE

A construction trades specialist who is also a teacher at City Academy provides construction skills training to participants approximately 15 hours a week at the worksite. In addition, participants attend job readiness classes that emphasize work related behaviors such as punctuality, regular attendance, and working cooperatively.

"The construction has taught me to work with people, to understand them, and have them understand me." - Norman Newland

LEADERSHIP/ SUPPORT SERVICES

As advisory board members, students are involved in the actual planning and evaluation of the construction projects, including making public presentations to the city council, selecting project sites, and petitioning city offices to obtain site approval and control. Students also participate in civic and cultural activities. Case management and counseling is provided by City Academy staff and a school psychologist who assists youth in personal, academic, and job areas.

HOUSING

In 1995, students renovated six properties on the lower eastside of St. Paul to provide affordable housing to approximately 36 homeless and very low income tenants.

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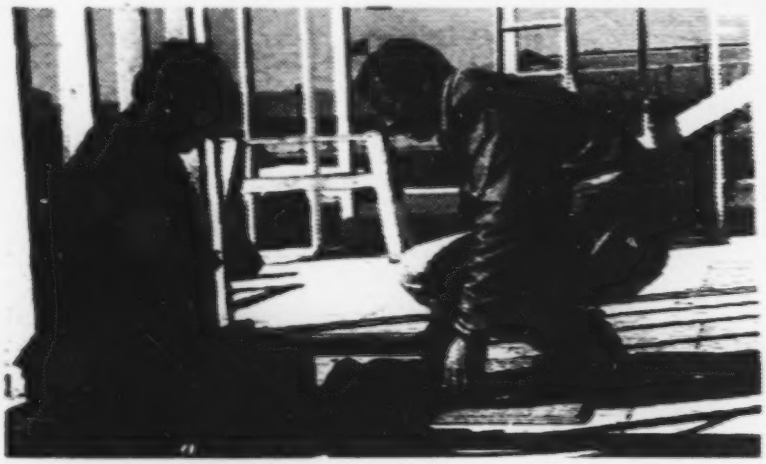
RURAL MINNESOTA CEP, INC.
DETROIT LAKES, MN

Rural MN CEP, Inc. operates the Minnesota YouthBuild Program in collaboration with the Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council, West Central Minnesota Housing Partnership, Region IV Council on Domestic Violence, and Habitat for Humanity. The project leveraged $188,000 of private, public, and nonprofit funds in addition to a $75,000 grant from the Department of Economic Security. In 1995, the program expanded into the town of Fergus Falls.



EDUCATION

Students pursue their high school diplomas at the Perham and Fergus Falls Alternative Schools. Each school provides courses in math, English, social studies, science, business, personal and family science, work relations, and career decisions. In addition, career assessment, job search and job readiness classes are provided by Rural MN CEP, Inc. The classroom maintains a teacher-student ratio of 1 to 5 and academic credit is earned for every 170 hours of instruction.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Two certified construction trades instructors provide skill training to two crews of youth. Each young person spends half of each day performing construction tasks at the job site. Participants earn $4.25 an hour for training on the work site.

LEADERSHIP/SUPPORT SERVICES

Participants rotate as crew leaders and plan recreational activities. As members of the project advisory committee, participants also assist in making project decisions and evaluating program outcomes. A CEP employment counselor conducts individual assessments, initiates progress meetings with students, and assists students with services such as child care, family or legal emergencies, and personal counseling.

HOUSING

Rural MN CEP, Inc. participants have built four single family homes in Perham, Blufton, and Fergus Falls which will provide affordable homeownership for four low income families selected through Habitat for Humanity applications. In addition, the Perham crew completed renovation of the Community Action Building in New York Mills and remodeled an unfinished building to be used for Head Start activities.

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GUADALUPE AREA PROJECT
ST. PAUL, MN

The Guadalupe Area Project operates the Minnesota YouthBuild Program on the West Side of St. Paul in collaboration with Project for Pride in Living, The Neighborhood Community Development Association (NeDA), the American Red Cross, and Ain Dah Yung. The project leveraged $148,800 of private, public, and nonprofit funds in addition to the $25,000 grant it received from the Department of Economic Security in 1995.

EDUCATION
Each student spends approximately 15 hours a week learning basic skills in the classroom. A teacher-student ratio of 1:8 is maintained year round. The curriculum emphasizes applied math and reading skills as well as social studies, science, and life skills. In addition, all participants are enrolled in a job readiness course that assesses career interests and aptitudes and covers vocational issues, work readiness training, and job shadowing. It is expected that approximately 85% of all participants will receive a high school diploma or GED upon completion of the program and about half of those will enroll in post-secondary programs.

WORK EXPERIENCE
A journeyman carpenter provides specific construction skills training to two crews of three youth each on the work site. Participants spend approximately 15 hours a week in work experience training which includes work maturity skills, safety training, teamwork development, and carpentry skills. A $100 stipend may be earned each school quarter upon successful completion of attendance and work experience goals. During the five week summer session, four participants earn $5.00 an hour for 40 hours of work each week. It is expected that approximately 80% of those who complete the program will gain employment.

LEADERSHIP/SUPPORT SERVICES
Participants receive specialized leadership training provided by the Wilder Foundation that focuses on team building activities and a cooperative spirit. In addition, the program utilizes a mentoring relationship between students and staff. Support services are provided at GAP and through referrals in the community. Health Start will operate a health clinic at the school offering health services and assessments, mental health counseling, social workers, nutrition, and health education.

HOUSING
During the next two years, it is expected that the GAP project will construct or renovate 26 units of transitional housing for approximately 100 homeless and low income persons in the metro area.

PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL 5
WILLMAR, MN

Private Industry Council 5 (covering an 11 county area) operates the Minnesota YouthBuild program in the city of Willmar in collaboration with the Willmar Alternative Learning Center (ALC) and Habitat for Humanity. The project leveraged $179,276 in private, public, and in-kind contributions in addition to the $46,000 grant it received from the Department of Economic Security. Over the next year the program is expected to serve 20 low income dropouts and juvenile offenders.

EDUCATION

Academic activities will be highly integrated with work experience, job readiness, and leadership activities. The Willmar Alternative Learning Center provides courses in applied math and English, vocational social studies, communication, English as a Second language, and Work Readiness. The classroom maintains a teacher-student ratio of 1:5 and academic credit is earned on an individualized basis. It is expected that approximately 40% of participants will receive a high school diploma or GED after completing the program and about half of those will enroll in post-secondary and technical college programs.

WORK EXPERIENCE

A certified vocational instructor provides skill training to two crews of five youth each. Each participant spends approximately half of each day at the job site learning specific carpentry skills: use of hand and power tools, interpreting floor plans, removing and installing siding, layout of interior and exterior walls, and installation of doors, jambs, windows, insulation, and gypsum wallboard. It is expected that approximately 40% of those who complete the program will gain employment.

LEADERSHIP/SUPPORT SERVICES

In the classroom and on the job site, participants are taught a set of basic goals, team work principles, awareness of local social issues, problem solving skills and civic responsibility. Participants will also attend board of director meetings as well as research and report on local government and community organizations that serve the homeless in their local area. Peer tutoring and support are also incorporated into the program design. Support services will be provided by local social service agencies who are linked with the Willmar ALC. A school counselor will provide support and assistance for program graduates to enroll in post-secondary institutions and a work experience coordinator will assist youth with job development, job placement, and job retention strategies.

HOUSING

During the next two years, it is expected that the PIC 5 YouthBuild program will construct two single family houses in conjunction with Habitat for Humanity that will provide homes for two homeless and low-income families in the Willmar area.

ARROWHEAD ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AGENCY
VIRGINIA, MN

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc. operates their YouthBuild program in the city of Evelth in collaboration with the Northland Educational Cooperative, Range Technical College, and Virginia and Evelth HRAs. The project leveraged $698,200 in matching funds in addition to the $46,000 in grant funds from the Department of Economic Security.

EDUCATION

Academic activities will be highly integrated with work experience, job readiness, and leadership activities. Each student spends approximately 20 hours a week learning basic skills in the classroom. A teacher-student ratio of 1:8 is maintained year round. The curriculum emphasizes applied math and reading skills as well as social studies, science, and life skills. In addition, all participants will receive pre-employment and job readiness training that includes job search skills, application and interview skills, and job retention strategies. It is expected that approximately 75% of all participants will receive a high school diploma or GED upon completion of the program and about half of those will enroll in post-secondary and technical college programs.

WORK EXPERIENCE

A journeyman carpenter provides specific construction skills training to youth at the work site at a 1:7 instructor to student ratio. Participants spend approximately 16 hours a week in work experience training and may earn up to $2,000 per year. Work experience emphasizes teamwork, productivity, safety, and construction skills training. It is expected that approximately 50% of those who complete the program will gain employment at an average wage of 6 to 7 dollars an hour. A close association with the Iron Range Building and Trade Unions will compliment this activity.

LEADERSHIP/SUPPORT SERVICES

Participants will have opportunities to play an active role in operating the program using decision making, public speaking, and negotiating skills. Challenge activities will be provided to build self-esteem and cooperation among youth. Collaborative planning efforts with the SELF Independent Living Skills project will provide opportunities for extensive leadership activities. Support services will be provided by individual and group counseling as well as referral services for health, psychiatric, chemical dependency, housing, clothing, food, legal, child care and family emergencies.

HOUSING

AEOA plans to renovate an abandoned and dilapidated apartment building to provide 12 single room occupancy units of permanent housing for homeless persons. The building has been recognized to be eligible for placement on the National Historic Register. In addition, the program will renovate an abandoned three bedroom single family home to provide home ownership for a low income family in the Evelth area.

YOUTHBUILD PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS and OUTCOMES

Total Number of Participants 315

Gender

Male	75%
Female	25%

Age

16-17	65%
18-19	30%
20-24	10%

Race/Ethnicity

African American	20%
Native American	13%
Hispanic	7%
Asian American	4%
White	56%

At-Risk Indicators

Left School or Expelled	80%
Adult or Juvenile Offender	65%
Pregnant or Parenting Teen	20%
Recovering Chemically Dependent	30%
Emotionally/Behaviorally or Learning Disabled	50%
Foster Child	10%
Homeless	10%
From Single Parent Family	65%
Economically Disadvantaged	90%
Median Household Income	$6,900

Program Outcomes

Received High School and/or Vo-Tech Credit	90%
Completed a Major Grade Level	80%
Completed High School or Obtained GED	70%
Enrolled in Post-Secondary Institution or Vo-Tech	30%
Entered Employment	60%
Entered the Building Trades Profession or Related Field	15%
Average Wage of Unsubsidized Employment	$7.00

Housing Outcomes

Total Number of Units Constructed and Renovated	46
Total Number of Tenants Housed	220
Total Number of Homeless Tenants Housed	100
Total Number of Battered Women and Families Housed	30

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE MINNESOTA YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM CONTACT:

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Upon request, this report is available in alternate formats such as audio, braille or computer disk.

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